

Using Restorative Practices to Address Student Attendance

Nebraska CIP Summit

September 2025

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STATE OF
NEBRASKA
JUDICIAL BRANCH

Office of Dispute
Resolution



**This project is supported by Grant #15PJDP-21-GG-03218-JRIX awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.*



Meet your Presenters

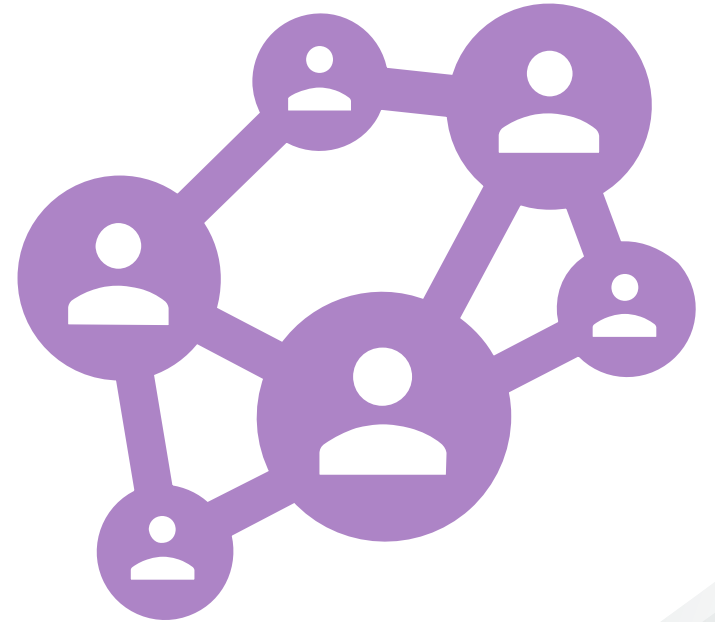
Learning Objectives

Through this presentation, participants will:

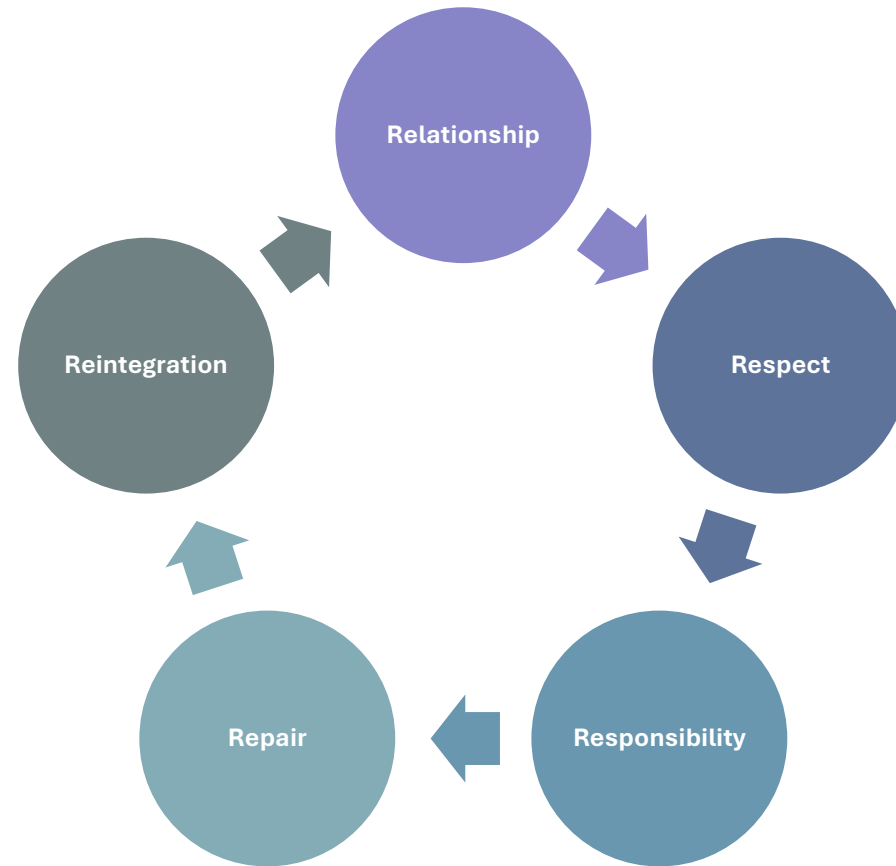
- Gain a basic understanding of the Restorative Practice Continuum.
- Understand definitions of restorative approaches and programs.
- Explore Nebraska evaluation results for attendance related programs.
- Examine how student success is defined.
- Investigate a continuum of restorative services and integration with other intervention models.
- Demonstrate restorative skills to impact engagement.

What Does it Mean to be Restorative?

- **Restorative Practices:** Focus on building community, relationships, repairing harm, community involvement. Emphasizes collective problem solving and community healing.
- **Restorative Justice:** Formal processes the person(s) harmed and the person(s) causing harm together, to the extent possible, to acknowledge the harm, the need for repair, and the plan to repair the harm.
- **Mediation:** Focused on resolving a specific conflict or dispute between parties. Seeks negotiated agreements.



Restorative Practice Values



RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

informal			formal	
affective statements	affective questions	small impromptu conversation	circle	formal conference

80/20

Page 12 in *Restorative Practices Handbook*

Nebraska Juvenile Restorative Justice & Family Intervention Initiative

Overview of Statewide Restorative Initiative

Nebraska Juvenile Restorative Justice & Family Intervention Initiative – services began July 2022

Goals:

- Reduce recidivism
- Engage families to address issues that impact youth success & identify needed resources
- Further evaluate youth restorative justice (RJ) processes
- Develop a system that support long-term sustainability of juvenile RJ programming



RJ Processes Available through Initiative

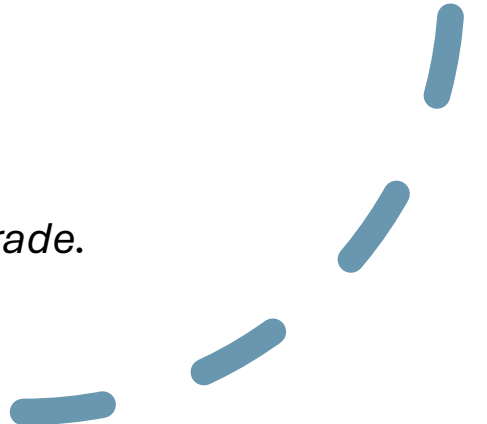
- Victim Youth Conference (piloted 2015, statewide 2018)
- Juvenile Justice Family Group Conference
- Juvenile Justice Family Conference
- Excessive Absenteeism Conference

Upstream Focus

Address early*

- Absenteeism at 5-10 days
 - Earlier if there is a history of absenteeism
- Referral from:
 - School
 - Diversion/county attorney
 - Probation
- Chronic absenteeism can translate into students having difficulty:
 - Learning to read by the 3rd grade
 - Achieving in middle school
 - Graduating from high school

**Early can refer to low # of absences as well as also grade.*



The image features a large white circle centered on a solid purple background. Along the left edge of the white circle, there are several short, teal-colored dashed line segments. At the bottom right edge of the white circle, there is a single, solid teal-colored circle.

What is Student
Success?

Barriers	Aversion	Disengagement	Misconceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronic and acute illness • family responsibilities or home situation • trauma • poor transportation • housing and food insecurity • inequitable access to needed services • system involvement • lack of predictable schedules for learning • lack of access to tech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struggling academically and/or behaviorally • unwelcoming school climate • social and peer challenges • anxiety • biased disciplinary and suspension practices • undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations • parents had negative educational experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction • bored • no meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages) • lack of enrichment opportunities • lack of academic and behavioral support • failure to earn credits • drawn to low-wage job vs. being in high school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • absences are only a problem if they are unexcused • missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning • lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences • sporadic absences aren't a problem • attendance only matters in the older grades • suspensions don't count as absence

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Restorative Practices & Statute

§79-209(b):

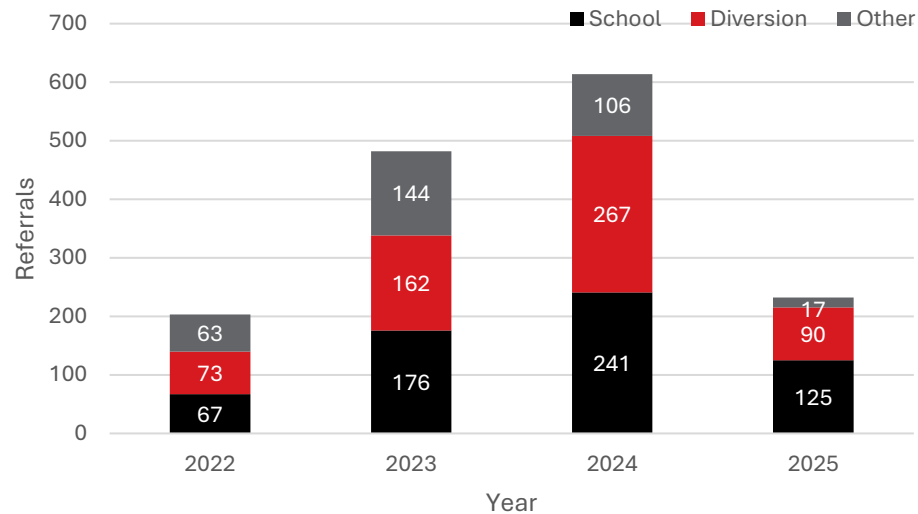
“...The plan shall include, if agreed to by the person who is responsible for making educational decisions on behalf of the child, an educational evaluation to determine whether any intellectual, academic, physical, or social-emotional barriers are contributing factors to the lack of attendance. The plan shall also consider, but not be limited to:
(vi) Referral to restorative justice practices or services.”

A decorative graphic consisting of a teal dashed line forming an arc on the left side of the white circle, and a solid teal circle at the bottom right edge of the white circle.

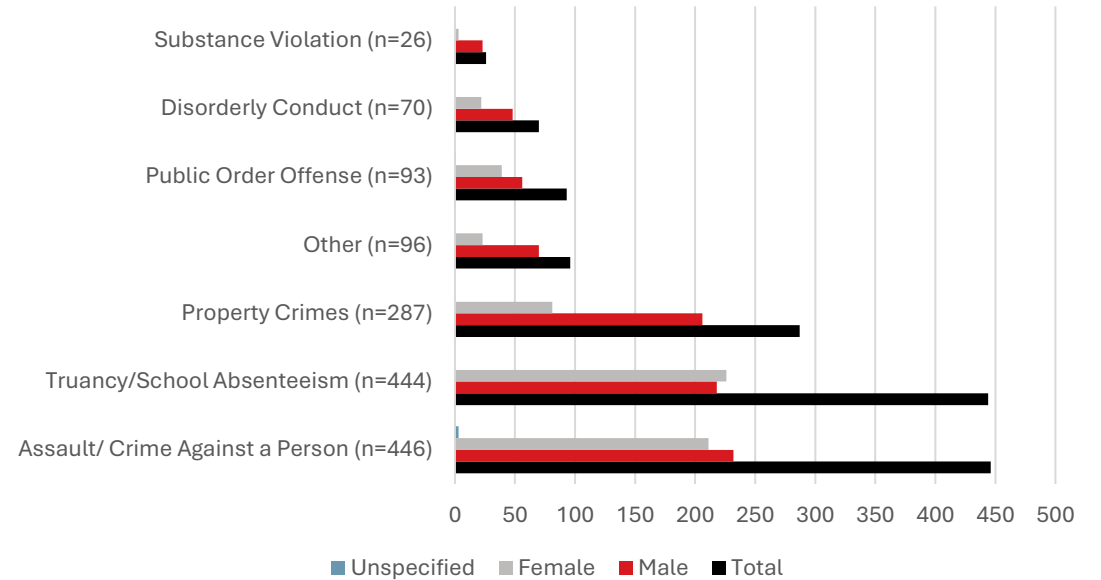
Evaluating the Initiative

Evaluation Results

Source of Referral by Year

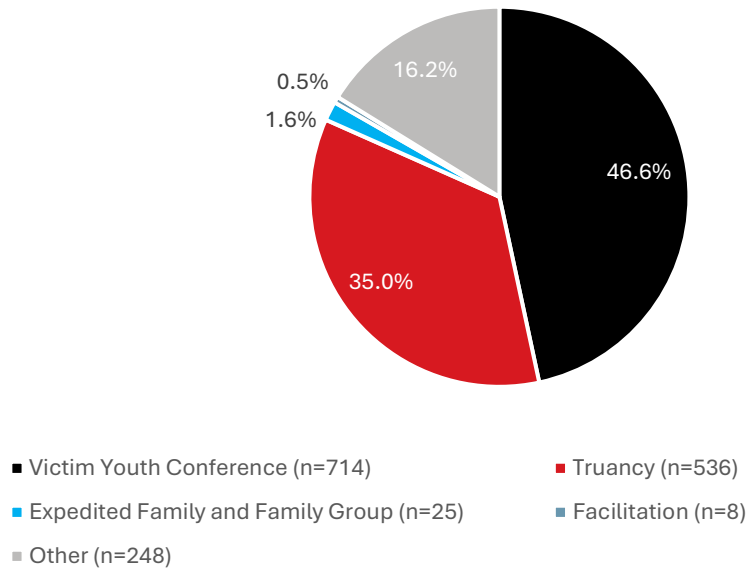


Reason for Referral by Sex

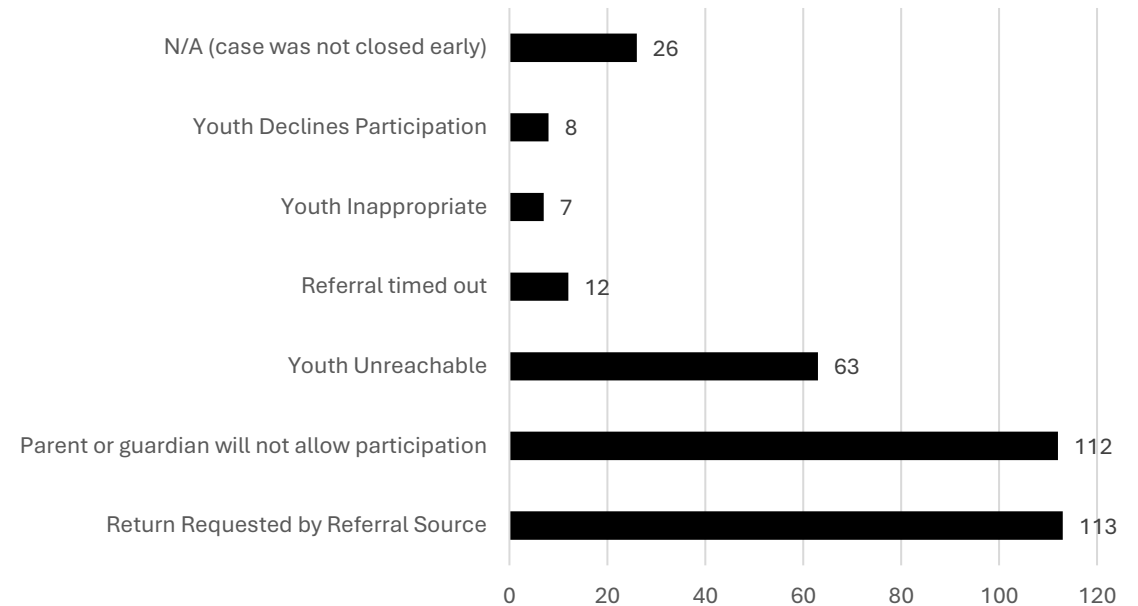


Understanding RJ Utilization: Conference Types and Non-Held Referrals

Conference Type Frequencies

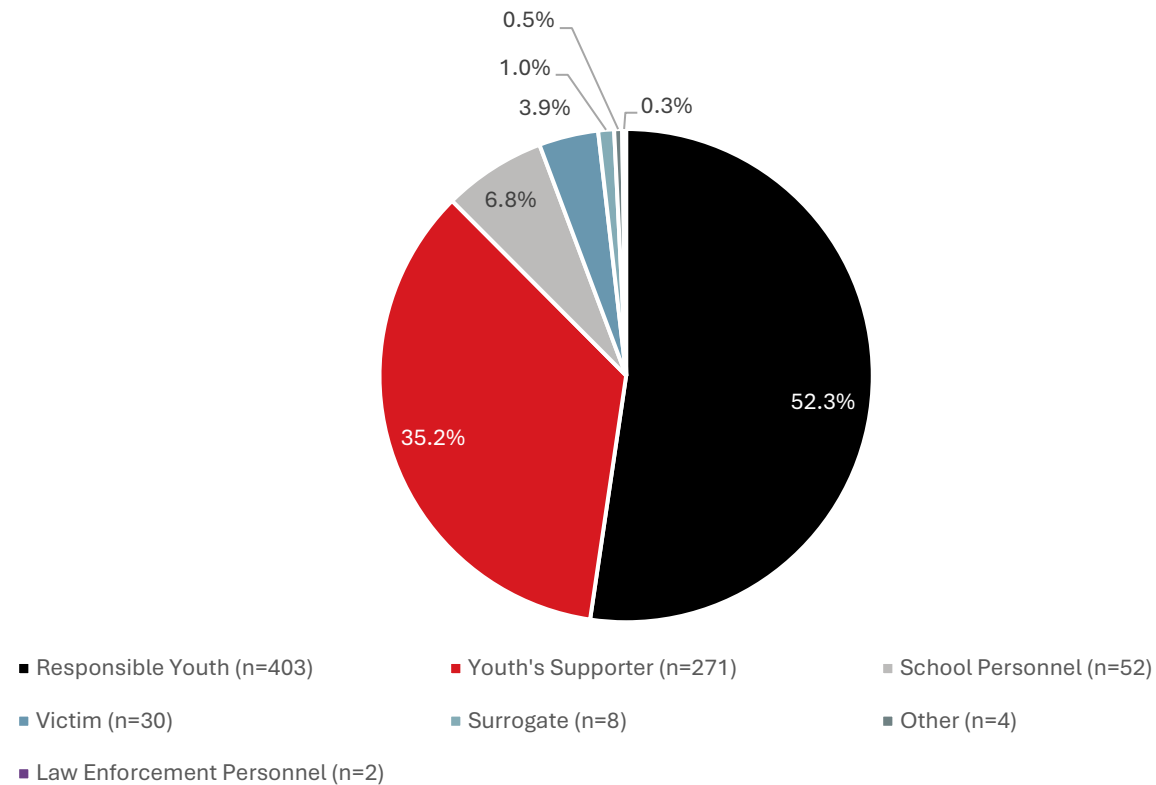


Reasons RJ Conferences were Referred but not Held



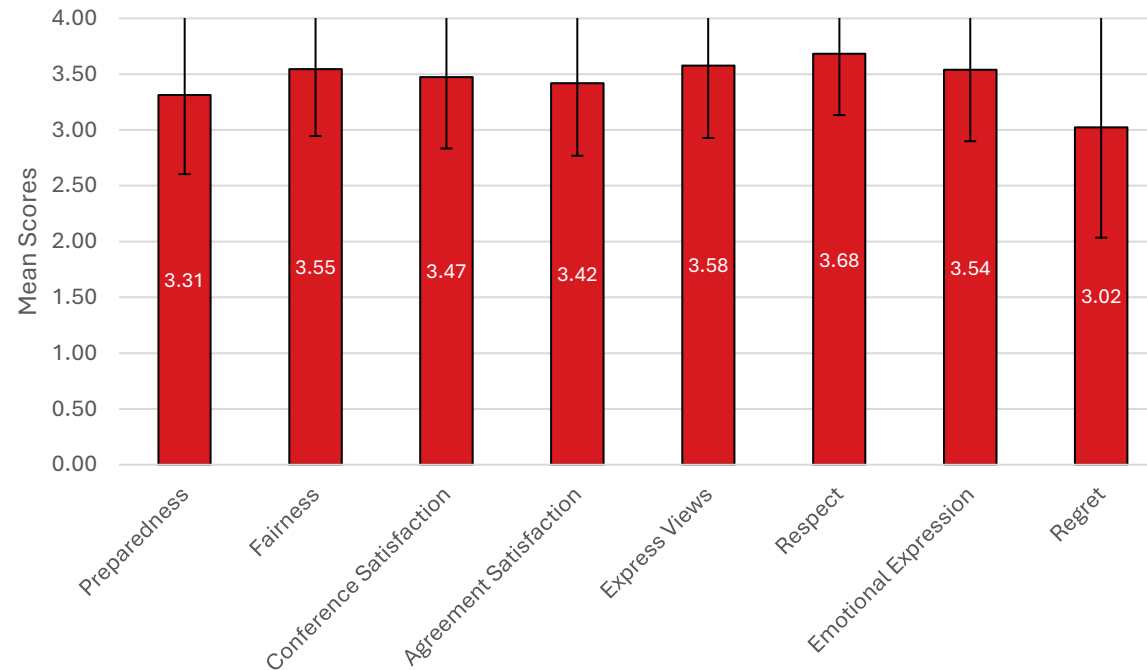
Understanding RJ Impact: Participant Roles and Perspectives

Participant Roles – Evaluation Survey



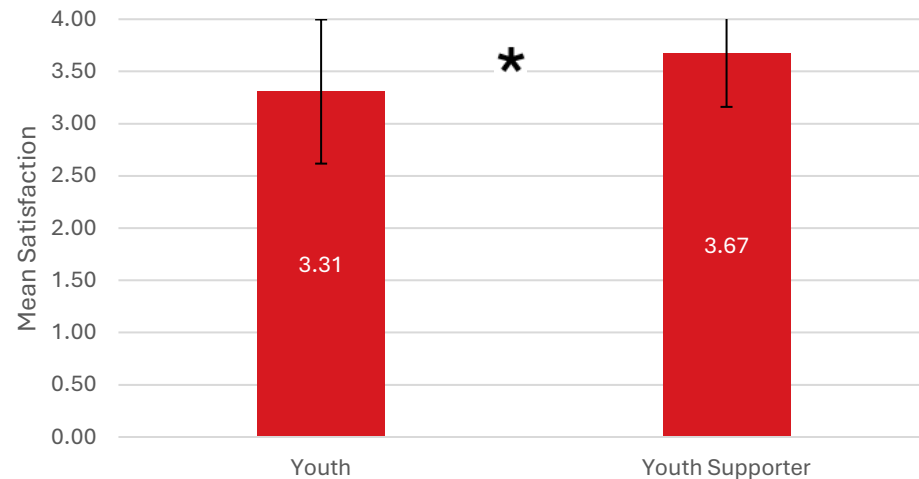
Understanding RJ Impact: Participant Roles and Perspectives (Cont.)

Mean Scores with Standard Deviations for Each Evaluation Scale Domain

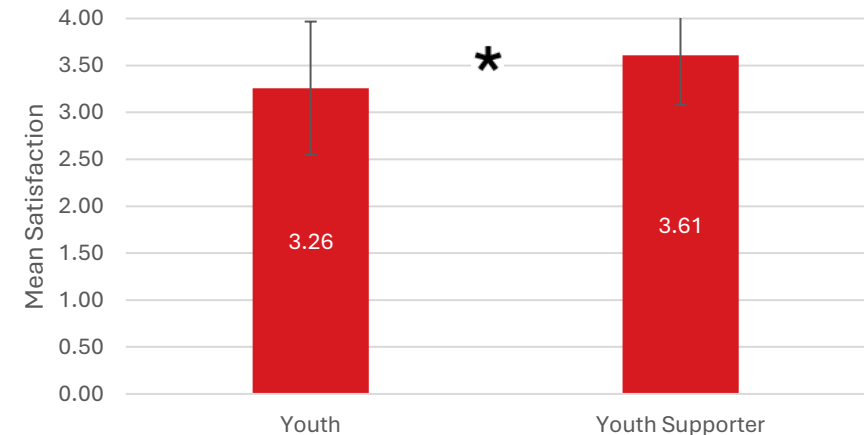


Understanding RJ Impact: Participant Roles and Perspectives (Cont.)

Conference Satisfaction by Participant Type



Agreement Satisfaction by Participant Type



Youth supporters include parents, guardians, and school officials. Youth $n = 403$; Youth Supporter $n = 328$

Understanding RJ Outcomes: Future System Involvement

Total Cases with FSI within 1 year by Sex

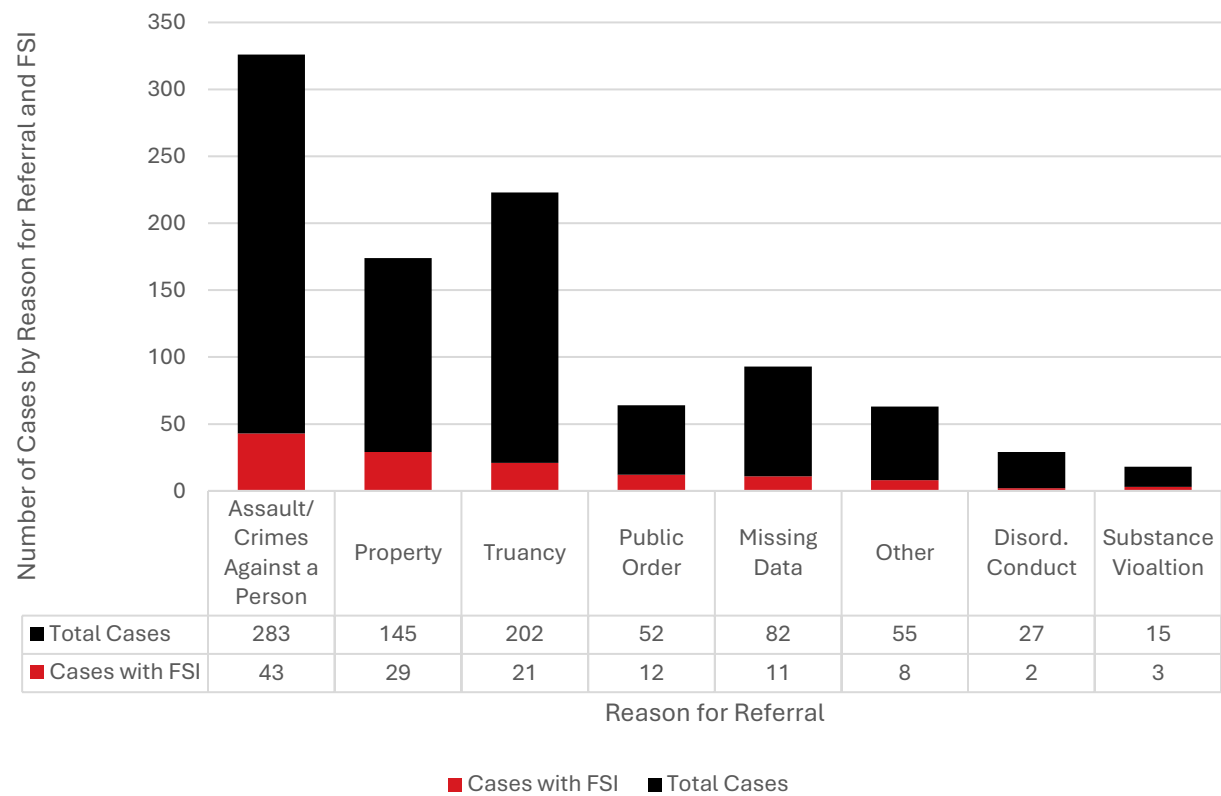
Sex	FSI		
	Yes	No	Total
Female	40 (10.7%)	335 (89.3%)	375
Male	89 (18.6%)	390 (81.4%)	479
Unspecified/Unknown	-	7 (100%)	7
Total	129 (15.0%)	732 (85.0%)	861

Cases with FSI within 1 year by Race / Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	FSI		
	Yes	No	Total
White	63 (13.8%)	392 (86.2%)	455
Black/African American	29 (16.3%)	149 (83.7%)	178
Other Race	14 (17.1%)	68 (82.9%)	82
Multiple Races	13 (17.3%)	62 (82.7%)	75
Unspecified	8 (19.5%)	33 (80.5%)	41
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	16 (100%)	16
Missing	-	7 (100%)	7
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	5
Asian	-	2 (100%)	2
Total	129 (15.0%)	732 (85.0%)	861

Understanding RJ Outcomes: Future System Involvement (Cont.)

Future System Involvement and Reason for Referral for each Case from July 1, 2022 through March 16, 2024



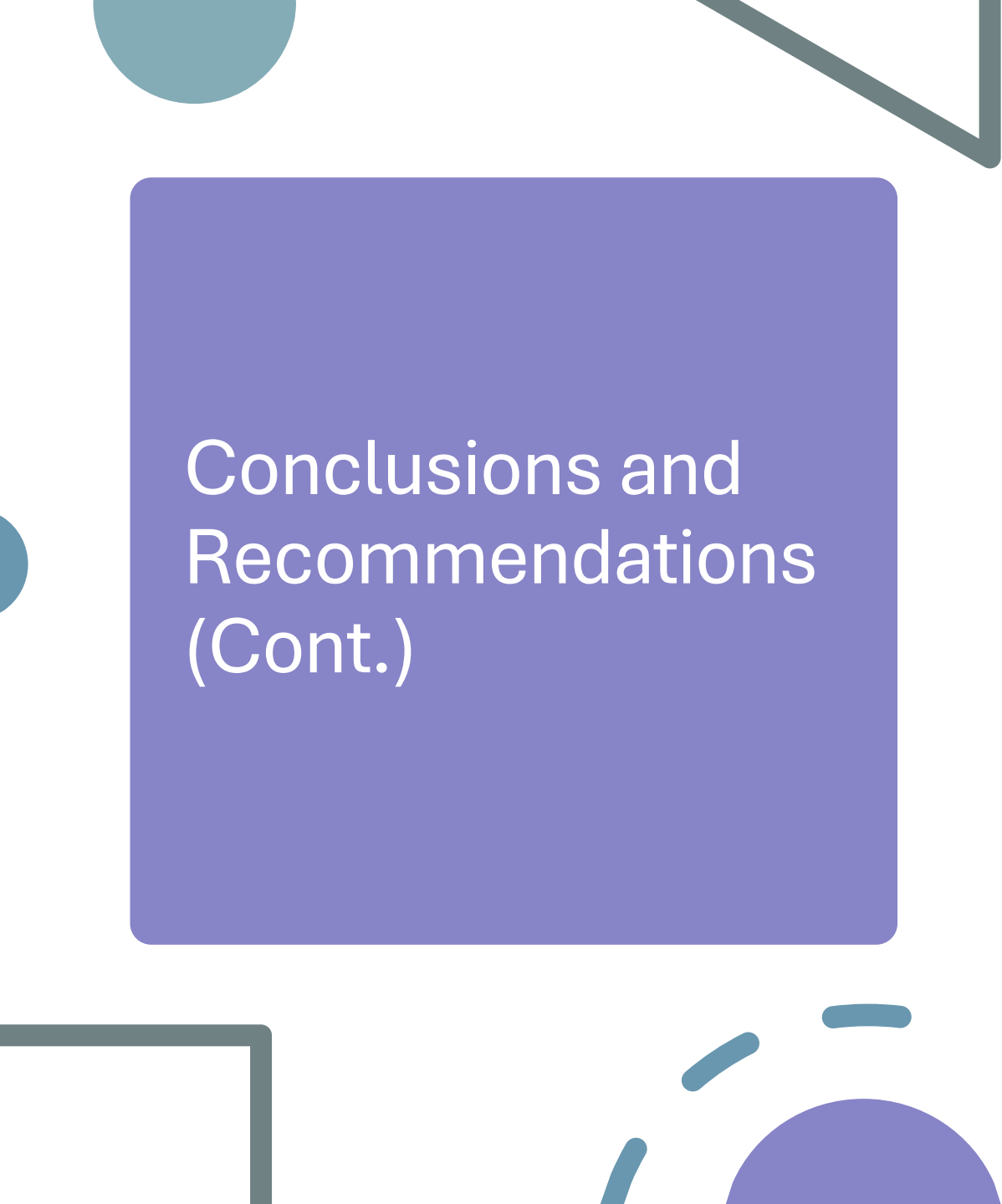
Understanding RJ Outcomes: Addressing Truancy and Excessive Absenteeism

- Engagement: Excessive absenteeism can be an early warning sign for disengagement and future system involvement. RJ addresses on root causes and seeks to heal harm and strengthen connection.
- High Satisfaction: 97% satisfied with conferences; 94% with agreements.
- Lower FSI: 10.3% referred for Excessive Absenteeism Conferencing had future system involvement.



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Participants were highly satisfied with the RJ process and youth reported feeling respected and having the opportunity to express their views.
- Some parents opt out of RJ programming; understanding why could help increase participation and improve outcomes.
- Young men and youth of color were more likely to experience FSI. Centers should consider added supports to mitigate these disparities.
- Court-ordered youth had higher FSI (23.2%) than non-court-ordered youth (13.4%).



Conclusions and Recommendations (Cont.)

- Explore context around youth satisfaction with processes, and how to amplify youth voices in conferences and agreements.
- Collect qualitative data to understand satisfaction, FSI, agreement completion, and barriers (parental) to participation.
- Provide additional support for high-risk groups (young men, youth of color, etc.) to improve outcomes.
- Align and centralize data collection across diversion programs to allow clearer comparisons.



Restorative Approaches Start with Us

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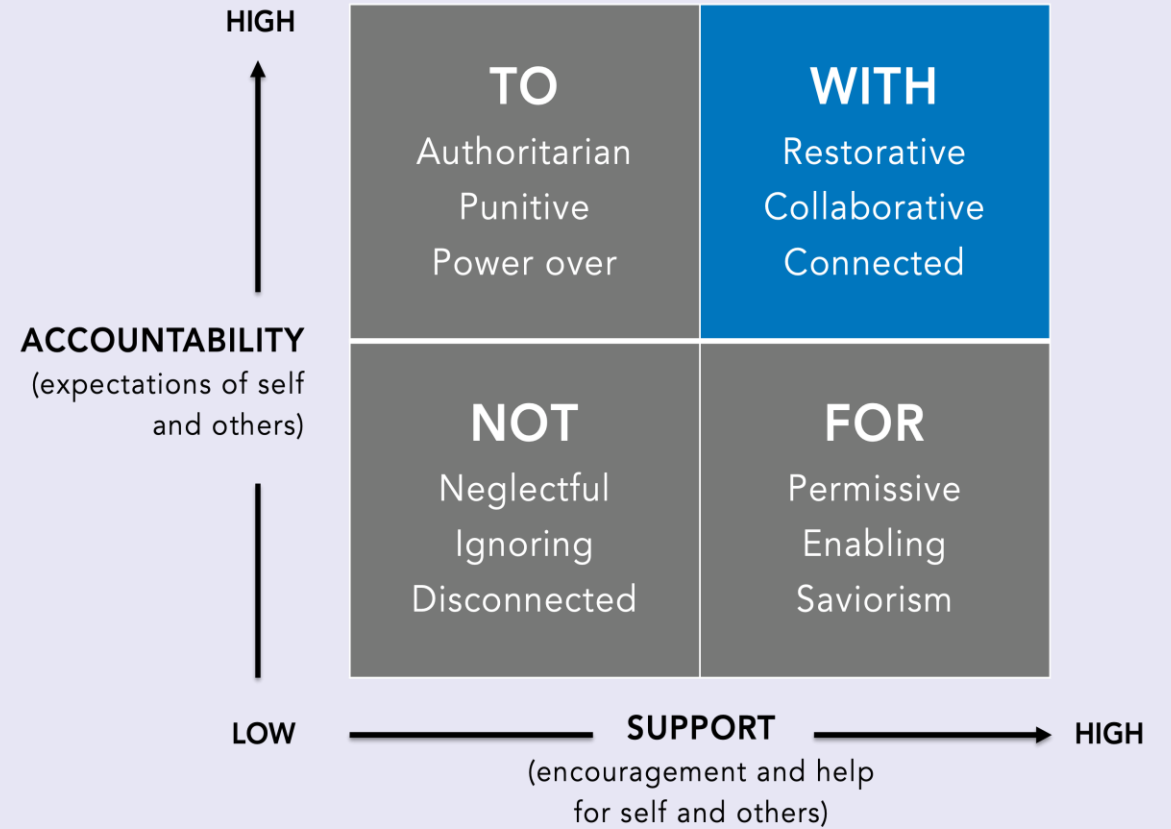
Page 12 in *Restorative Practices Handbook*

Fundamental Hypothesis

“Human beings are happier, healthier, and more productive and more likely to make positive changes in their own behavior and in their communities when we do things with them, rather than to them or for them or not at all.”

- Adapted by Gina Baral Abrams, Elizabeth Smull, and Mary Jo Hebling from Wachtel (2005)
- © International Institute for Restorative Practices

ENGAGING WITH OTHERS



Resources

- International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP) [IIRP Graduate School :: Institute for Restorative Practices](#)
 - K-12 Resources; Research; Toolkits; Case Studies
- Restorative Solutions: [Restorative Solutions | Restorative Practices and Community Justice](#)
 - K-12 Resources; Videos; Research; Handouts
- Restorative Teaching Tools: [Home Page | Restorative Teaching Tools](#)

Opportunities

Foundations of Restorative
Justice Practices Training – JJI

Restorative Justice Conferencing
– Office of Dispute Resolution

Connect with your local
mediation center

Thank You
for Coming!

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